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**DCS Releases Report Findings On Recent Disturbance
Lack of Training, Communication and Accountability Cited**

NASHVILLE – Department of Children's Services Commissioner Viola Miller today released the nine investigative concerns identified in the internal affairs report investigating the Woodland Hills Youth Development Center attempted escape and disturbance of March 4, 2004.

Completed on April 21, the findings cite security breaches, student to staff ratio violations, lack of clear crisis plan training and ineffective communication among staff members as contributing factors to the uprising, which caused injury to 16 Woodland Hills staff members.

As a result, 22 students were disciplined, separated and transferred to three sister youth development centers across the state: Wilder Youth Development Center in Fayette Co., Taft Youth Development Center in Bledsoe Co., and Mountain View Youth Development Center in Jefferson Co.

Along with list of investigative concerns, the department released an outline of a corresponding corrective action plan, which has been in development since mid-March.

"These findings point out the critical need for Woodland Hills leadership and staff to immediately begin following the preventive steps outlined in the corrective action plan," said Miller. "We now have a juvenile justice director who is dedicated to ensuring strict accountability among Woodland Hills staff, and I am confident he will take the swift and decisive action needed to make the essential changes outlined in the report."

Newly appointed Executive Director for Juvenile Justice Programs Ken Steverson said that along with implementing corrective action, he is looking at the possible development of a DCS tactical unit and further partnership and joint training with the Metro Nashville Police Department.

"We were fortunate that Metro police responded to our call for assistance in such a timely and effective manner," Steverson said.

"Developing appropriate decision making skills is a primary treatment focus for the students at Woodland Hills and this was evidenced that morning when the overwhelming majority of students chose not to participate in the disturbance," Steverson said. "In fact, several students proved instrumental in ensuring the safety of staff members."

Woodland Hills Youth Development Center is located in Davidson County and serves up to 120 male students from Middle Tennessee and 24 female students from throughout the state. The facility currently holds 88 males and 24 females. A new female facility adjacent to Woodland Hills is under construction and is scheduled to open this fall.

For more information on Youth Development Centers please visit the DCS website:
www.state.tn.us/youth/treatment/youth.htm.

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Note: Please see the nine investigative concerns and corrective actions.